

WHAT IS CIVICSPARK?

CivicSpark is Governor Brown's AmeriCorps program dedicated to building capacity for local governments to address climate change. Each year, in 9 regions throughout California, 48 CivicSpark members work closely with local governments to implement climate, energy, and sustainability projects, supporting over 90 cities, schools, and other public agencies.

In its first year, CivicSpark has assisted over 86 local government agencies, completing mitigation and adaptation projects on topics including sustainable transportation, energy efficiency, solar procurement, urban forestry, sea level rise, climate action plan implementation, and GHG inventorying and benchmarking.

"Climate change is a global challenge that requires strong, sustained local action. This program gets young people into the communities across California to help reduce emissions and boost energy efficiency."

California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

PARTNER WITH CIVICSPARK

CivicSpark creates a delivery mechanism and infrastructure for meaningful and productive community partnerships to tackle climate change at the local level. CivicSpark members are college graduates with environmental degrees and relevant experience, who can assist state agencies to work more closely with communities on climate change. Embedded locally, members provide an exceptional means to gather insight into what works and what needs to change in order for state policy to reduce GHG emissions more effectively.

State agencies can collaborate with CivicSpark to improve their engagement with local governments and communities by:

1. Sponsoring a CivicSpark member, particularly in California's traditionally underserved regions, to advance state initiatives
2. Using CivicSpark members to enhance communication and collaboration with local governments and communities, and to share information and gather input on local programs and activities.
3. Dispersing specific resources and tools through CivicSpark members to reach the communities they serve directly.
4. Supporting GHG emissions reduction and climate adaptation and preparedness to realize the goals of Governor Brown's Executive Order B-30-15, which establishes the most ambitious GHG reduction target in North America.

2015-2016 CALENDAR

- **June - July:** Call for proposals is open. Informational webinar for state agencies to learn more about CivicSpark. Applications for the 2015-16 program year closes on July 31, 2015.
- **June - September:** LGC staff meet with agency staff to discuss interest and opportunities for engagement
- **October:** Member orientation takes place.
- **November:** Projects get underway.



EARLY SUCCESS – BY THE NUMBERS

- **\$1 million of local matching funds** have already been dedicated to bring CivicSpark to communities statewide.
- **34 projects** currently support **88 local governments**, 50% of which are "high-need."
- **35,000 hours of service** to California communities since November 2014.
- **20%** of the first class of CivicSpark members have an advanced degree.
- **5:1** – CivicSpark received 5 applications for each open position (**250 total**), an acceptance rate comparable to more established programs.



CivicSpark

a program of the Local Government Commission

THE 4 MAIN STEPS TO LAUNCHING A CIVICSPARK PROJECT

Initial Project Application

- Provide basic project details
- Include information about local government(s) agencies receiving services

Service Agreement

- Describe project scope
- Set project hours and total costs

Pre-Service Capacity Survey

- Survey of climate issues and understanding in the community
- Define goals for project

Gap Assessment

- Member reviews key documents
- Project contact meets with member to finalize goals and define volunteer and transitional strategy

1. To apply, State Agencies need to complete an initial application that includes a description of desired projects, the timing for implementation, contacts, and key information about the local governments the project will serve. LGC staff contact the project partner to discuss the proposed project, evaluate the eligibility and high need status of the local government the project will serve, and ensure the project is suitable for CivicSpark.
2. The project partner and LGC complete a service agreement that outlines the terms, costs, and basic project scope (LGC has a template for use). For more information on project costing, see the next page.
3. LGC staff share a “pre-service capacity assessment survey” with the participating local government staff to get a baseline and to define the local government’s specific goals for the project.
4. Following this final pre-project step, CivicSpark members start to work directly on the project. This phase starts with a high-level gap assessment in which they review key documents from the local government and interview staff contacts to review the goals outlined in the capacity survey and define the volunteer engagement and transitional strategies to utilize during project implementation.

2014-15 STATE PROJECTS & CONNECTIONS

BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (BCDC)

BCDC directly contracted with LGC to support three members who are supporting the “resilient shorelines” initiative in Contra Costa County, San Rafael and more analyzing regional shoreline vulnerability around the Bay.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION (CALFIRE)

CalFire worked with the California Urban Forest Council and LGC to fund technical assistance to communities in the Central Valley. Through this program, CivicSpark Members are providing education and technical assistance to communities and specifically to support the effective consideration of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Urban Forestry grant program for the coming year.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (CDPH)

CDPH worked with LGC to develop and deliver a two part webinar series on the public health dimensions of climate change. Through this educational program, CDPH is able to help increase local awareness of public health issues related to climate change.

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (CPUC)

Over the last several years, the CPUC supported Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative (SEEC) has made an online greenhouse gas inventory and climate action planning tool – Clear Path – available for free to all local governments. In an effort to help increase the adoption of this tool, the SEEC program was able to provide 8 hours of free training to CivicSpark members statewide. Nine CivicSpark members are using Clean Path resources and tools in work with 18 local governments around the state. CivicSpark members are educating local government partners about the availability of this tool.

NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

In San Luis Obispo County, CivicSpark members used the Natural Resources Agency’s Adaptation Planning Guide to provide solar permit streamlining resources and guidance to local communities. To date, seven communities in the County are considering adoption of policies informed by the guide.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Local governments must demonstrate a **capacity need**, which is lack of a full-time, dedicated sustainability staff person, a formally adopted Climate Action Plan, or a comprehensive mechanism to annually track and report on climate action progress.

Statewide, at least 50% of CivicSpark's participating local governments must demonstrate **high need**, which is an unemployment above the state average of 6.3%, a net increase in community energy use over the previous year, local government employment below 2007 levels, or a CalEnviroScreen score in the top 2/3 statewide.

FISCAL CONTRIBUTION

CivicSpark is funded in part by the Corporation for National and Community Service, but also requires a fiscal contribution. The amount of this contribution—\$20 per project hour or less—depends on project size and covers workers' compensation, liability insurance, workplace costs, and member personnel benefits, which applies to both the AmeriCorps members and their regional supervisor's support, and is based only on project work, not the team's administrative or training time. The cost of each project, based on the core project hours provided, also includes additional resources that support successful completion of the project.

	325 hours (3 months)	650 hours (6 months)	1,300+ hours (11 months)
Cost	\$6,500	\$12,350	\$23,400
Rate	\$20/hour	\$19/hour (5% discount)	\$18/hour (10% discount)
Additional Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10-20 additional project-prep hours Up to \$200 in project-related travel covered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20-40 additional project-prep hours Up to \$400 in project-related travel covered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40-80 additional project-prep hours Up to \$800 in project-related travel covered Member is "embedded" on site with your organization throughout the service year Additional service activities and project hours dedicated to project community

THE CIVICSPARK TEAM

Each CivicSpark regional team consists of 3-6 members, a regional supervisor, and a regional partner. The team also receives support from CivicSpark's program manager and partners.

CivicSpark Members are college graduates, generally with environmental degrees and relevant work experience. They are selected through a competitive national recruitment process. Members provide on-the-ground service to one or more projects during the 11-month service term while receiving professional development and technical training throughout the year.

CivicSpark Regional Supervisors provide day-to-day guidance and mentorship for members and act as project managers for the regional teams. CivicSpark partners with Encore.org to recruit and place retired professionals in each CivicSpark region to share their project-management expertise with the next generation of climate leaders.

CivicSpark Regional Partners are organizations embedded in their regional communities, already taking climate action. Regional partners support CivicSpark by helping to recruit projects for local governments and providing regional insight and guidance.

Local Government Commission (LGC) is a nonprofit with more than 30 years of broad expertise in supporting local government policies and projects, manages the CivicSpark program. The LGC provides statewide program infrastructure, support for members and local governments, and training coordination. It also ensures that performance goals are met.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Serves as the State's main point-of-contact with CivicSpark, working closely with the LGC to ensure that CivicSpark aligns with state goals, the state GHG policy process is informed by local level experience, and that project teams are using cutting-edge state tools and resources. OPR provides support and information to AmeriCorps members and the communities they serve, and serves a bridge between regional supervisors, community partners, and the state.

California Volunteers manages programs and initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Californians engaged in service or volunteering.

Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund.

EXAMPLES FROM THE 2014-15 SERVICE YEAR

These examples highlight a continuum of related projects from research to planning to implementation, organized by project focus, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable communities, and climate change.

CLEAN AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

In the San Diego region, members conduct targeted outreach to increase participation in the San Diego Association of Government's iCommute program, a county-wide ridesharing, public transit and bicycling program within the communities of Del Mar, Solana Beach and Encinitas.

For North Coast communities – including Humboldt County, Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale Fortuna, Rio Dell and Trinidad – members support the expansion of alternative transportation and use of alternative fuels.

CLIMATE RESILIENCY AND ADAPTATION

Members in the Sacramento region working with the Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative will conduct a vulnerability assessment by auditing the existing preparedness plans and policies, and by developing recommendations to strengthen and scale these policies.

Members working alongside the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission support the implementation of new "Resilient Shorelines" projects in Contra Costa County and San Rafael, and also analyze the regional shoreline vulnerability

REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Members in the Sierra region support Climate Action Planning, community climate research, and climate-risk analysis for five local governments in the region. They will also help to implement and advance 5 new Energy Action Plans.

Members working on the Central Coast support eight communities in San Luis Obispo County. Their efforts will help reduce GHG emissions by increasing adoption of small-scale solar PV and providing greater energy efficiency education for the region.

A CivicSpark Member in the San Joaquin Valley helps the City and County of Fresno implement the "Business Energy Tune Up" program by providing outreach and education to businesses and supporting rebate and incentive programs.

In the San Gabriel Valley, members assist 16 local governments to implement a residential energy audit program, engaging homeowners undertaking renovation projects that require permits and encouraging them to install energy-efficiency measures as part of their home improvement.

In Los Angeles, members help LA County identify best practices for tracking and reporting energy performance of the local building stock, so that the County can increase energy efficiency in its own facilities and in those of partner cities in the region.

URBAN GREENING

In the San Joaquin Valley, members provide outreach and education to increase the adoption of urban forestry policies (and tree cover) by educating elected officials, staff, and community leaders, and by providing technical support and training.

In the Sacramento region, members work with communities and a local tree foundation to better understand the effects of urban heat islands and to increase the urban canopy in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

CONTACT

Kif Scheuer
Program Director
Local Government Commission
kscheuer@lgc.org
(415) 717-4809

Holly Roberson
Land Use Counsel
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
holly.roberson@opr.ca.gov

"CivicSpark leverages the unique power of national service to build local government climate capacity statewide, and will help local governments develop the programs, relationships and skills needed to mobilize California's climate-change response."

Karen Baker, Chief Services Officer, CaliforniaVolunteers



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